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ABSTRACT

This is one of a series of workbooks in consumer education which would also be useful in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. In addition to textual material, each lesson is illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings and contains various types of short exercises to check comprehension and vocabulary. (AMH)

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CARA'S CAPER
OR
So You Want to Buy a CAR?

by

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ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

WORKBOOKS IN THIS SERIES:

SURVIVAL AT THE SUPERMARKET

DRESS FOR LESS

REPAIRS WITHOUT RIP-OFFS

SO YOU WANT TO BUY A CAR?

BUYING ON CREDIT

For Cara's Caper:
International Standard Book Number: 0-88436-507-7

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180 East Sixth Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101
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HOW TO READ THIS WORKBOOK or WHERE TO FIND WHAT

The caper begins 5
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Remember why you and Cara need a car? 8
There are ways to find a good used car 9
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WORDS YOU MIGHT NEED TO SAY SOME DAY:

Page	*Word*	*How to Say It*
7	mechanic	mĕ KĂN ĭk
9	dealer	DĒ lĕr
9	warranty	WĂR rĕn tēē
10	mileage	MĪ lĭj
12	transmission	trănz MĬSH ĭn
16	tread	TRĔD
18	radius	RĀ dē ŭs
21	odometer	ō DŎM ĕt ĕr

The author wishes to extend a special word of thanks to Miss Linda Davis, Mechanic for the Division of Motor Vehicle Maintenance, City of Cleveland, Ohio.

CARA'S CAPER or So You Want to Buy a Car?

There were cars on her left,
There were cars on her right.
Cars with fancy front ends,
Cars skidding on ice!

Cara took a deep breath.
She wondered just why
A thing like a car
Seemed so hard to buy.

She jumped out of bed.
She looked at her list.
She tried to think of
Something she'd missed.

Cara woke up in a terrible fright . . .
She'd been having a nightmare
Through most of the night.

There were so many things
That she needed to know . . .
Like how to find the right car
For driving in snow!

Cara sighed.
She'd need help it seemed,
To pick out her own little
"MEAN MACHINE!"

First, read what Cara's list said.
Then make-up a list of your own, instead.

CARA'S LIST

The Kind of Car I Need

1. I need a car for going to work.
2. I need a car for doing my job.
3. I need a car that does not cost a lot of money.
4. I need a car that does not cost a lot of money to insure.
5. I need a car that is easy to get repaired.
6. I will do lots of driving. I need a car that does not use too much gas.
7. I need room for myself and my pooch, Scaramouch.

YOUR LIST

The Kind of Car I Need
(Circle Yes or No)

Think of the kind of car you might need.

1. I need a car for going to work.
   YES NO
2. I need a car to do my job.
   YES NO
3. I need a car I can pay for with the money I have in the bank.
   YES NO
4. I need a car I can pay for and I can make a payment each month if I need to.
   YES NO
5. I need a car that does not cost a lot of money to insure.
   YES NO
6. I need a car that is easy to repair or to get repaired.
   YES NO
7. I will do lots of driving. I need a car that does not use too much gas.
   YES NO
8. I need room for myself and my family.
   YES NO

If you have a car already, circle yes or no to tell what kind of car you already have.

With her pooch, Scaramouch,
Cara rushed up the street
Looking for the friend
She wanted to meet.

"Hey Lynn, Lynn,"
Cara called,
As she reached the gas station
At Tenth and McCall.

Lynn asked Cara why she needed a car.
"I just want to know what your reasons are."

Cara got dressed.
She was in a hurry
To meet a friend who could
Ease her worry.

Lynn worked on cars,
As "Mechanic-On-Duty."
When Lynn fixed a car
It ran like a beauty.

"Lynn, you've got to help me,"
Cara said.
"I need a new car
But the choosing I dread."

What were Cara's reasons for buying a car?
Do you remember what they are?
(Circle Cara's reasons for needing a car.)

1. She needs a car to do her job.
2. She wants to take her friends riding.
3. She needs a car to get to work.
4. She likes cars and wants to fix one up.
5. She wants to take Scaramouch with her on vacation.

WHAT I'LL LOOK FOR IN A CAR

Put a number next to the most important things you will look for in a car. Put 1 next to the thing that is most important. Put 2 next to what is next and so on.

_____ A good looking car.

_____ A car with lots of space for passengers.

_____ A car that rides smoothly.

_____ A car that has space to carry things.

_____ A car that does not use a lot of gas.

_____ A good car for going long distances.

_____ A good car for driving in the city.

There are different reasons for buying a car.
Always know what your reasons are.

Lynn quizzed her friend.
"By the way Cara,
I haven't heard you say.
Just how much is it you want to pay?"

"Well," Cara answered.
"Not too much.
But enough to get a good car
Not a piece of junk with a clutch."

"Emmm," Lynn was thoughtful.
"From what you say,
We need to look at USED CARS
right away.

"New cars are great
but they cost alot.
A good used car maybe best
for the money you've got."

"But where," Cara asked,
"Can we find a good used car?"
"Oh, there are ways," Lynn answered
"Here is what they are:"

WHERE TO SHOP FOR USED CARS:

USED CAR DEALER

- sells only used cars
- may not have a mechanic
- cars may have high mileage
- may not give a warranty or guarantee
- has mid-range to high prices (beware if price is too good here - you get what you pay for).

NEW CAR LOT (Trade-ins)

- sells new and used cars
- has mechanic
- usually gives a warranty or guarantee
- may have used cars with lower mileage
- has mid-range to high prices

PRIVATE OWNERS

- sell their own personal car - used
- no mechanic
- no warranty or guarantee
- car may have high mileage already or very low mileage (shop around)
- low to high prices, often taking "best offer"

WHY BUY A USED CAR?

Think about it. What might you need most from a used car? Circle the things that describe what you might need.

- a car that does not cost very much (low price)
- a car with a guarantee or warranty for repairs
- a low priced car you can work on and fix up yourself
- a high priced car that does not need any repair work

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FIND YOUR USED CAR HERE

Draw a line between the places (or people) that sell used cars and the kind of car you are likely to find at each.

SELLERS	TYPE OF CAR
USED CAR DEALER	A car with low mileage
PRIVATE OWNER	A car that needs repair but is low priced.
NEW AND USED CAR DEALER	A car with a warranty.
	A high priced car that does not need repair work.
	A low priced car that you can easily fix yourself.

It's hard to tell what kind of used car you'll find and where you'll find it. But let's help Cara begin her search.
Let's begin with newspapers - the classified ads section.

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When people write ads for newspapers, they use lots of short-cut language. This is because the more space they use, the more money they have to pay. Saving space saves money. Here is some short-cut language used for car ads.

SOME SHORT-CUT CAR LANGUAGE TO KNOW

Loaded means that it's got everything – this should at least include air conditioning, power steering, power brakes and am/fm radio. Of course, LOADED can mean much less or much more. It sounds good and helps get you interested in seeing the car.

M or K means thousand – it may apply to miles or dollars

A/C means air conditioning – good in some climates and may even be necessary but remember, it lowers the gas mileage the car will get – it also gives the car a higher resale or trade-in value.

P/B means power brakes.

P/S means power steering – it may also mean power seats.

P/W means power windows.

AM/FM means am/fm radio (may or may not be stereo so check if stereo is what you are looking for).

mpg means the miles the car gets per gallon of gas.

auto means that the car has an automatic transmission rather than a standard transmission (stick shift – stk). It's a funny thing, but nowadays, more cars seem to have automatic transmissions than not. A car with an automatic transmission costs more to begin with. It may also use more gas than a car with a standard transmission. Automatic cars bring a higher trade-in or resale price. Transmission includes gears to change speed. Also sends power from engine to center axle.

sta. wag. means station wagon

V-8 means an 8 cylinder engine. This is powerful, but it uses a lot of gas. Large cars have V-8 engines.

V-6 is a type of 6 cylinder engine. This kind of engine helps save gas. It is not as powerful as a V-8. May also be called 6 or 6 cyl. There also "straight 6" engines.

4 CYL. means a 4 cylinder engine. Most small cars have 4 cylinder engines. They save gas. They do not have much power for pulling a heavy load. But they are quite peppy.

4 WD means 4 wheel drive. Cars with 4 WD are good for driving in snow or mud or off the road. The 4 WD gives extra pulling power to the car. It also uses more gas.

What other short-cut language have you seen in the car ads you read?

NEWSPAPER ADS

Look at the newspaper ads. Do you know what kind of car each one describes?

Do you remember why Cara needs a car? Which car ads do you think she should answer? Which car ads seem to be for the type for car that Cara might need.

FIND A USED CAR IN THE NEWSPAPER

ADS ARE LIKE PUZZLES

Do you remember the short-cut language on page 12 and 13? Here are some newspaper ads for used cars. Read each ad. Look at the short-cut language in each ad. Answer the questions below.

FORD – '72, sta. wag, 63 K mi, excel. cond., a/c, p/s, p/b, auto V-8, blk w/red inter., $1,350

CHEV. – Malibu '67, V-8, 4 dr., am/fm, good MPG, incl. 6 tires. $895.

DODGE ASPEN – '77 tan, low mi., 2-dr., 6 cyl., auto, no rust, ps, carpet, snows. $3295.

Circle the answer.

1. Which car has 63 thousand miles on it?
   FORD CHEVROLET DODGE

2. Which car is black with red interior?
   FORD CHEVROLET DODGE

3. Which ad does <u>not</u> say that the car has power steering?
   FORD CHEVROLET DODGE

4. Which ad says that the car runs on regular gas?
   FORD CHEVROLET DODGE

5. Which ad says that the car has air conditioning?
   FORD CHEVROLET DODGE

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Can you use short-cut language to write an ad for the car below:
A 1975 Toyota with standard transmission, 4 cylinder engine, 50 thousand miles, air conditioning and am/fm radio.

Write your ad here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

The ads on page 14 read as follows:

FORD - 1972 station wagon, 63,000 miles, excellent condition, air conditioning, power steering, power brakes, automatic transmission, black with red interior, $1,350.

CHEVROLET - 1967 Malibu, V-8 engine, 4 door, am/fm radio, gets good miles per gallon, includes 6 tires. $895.

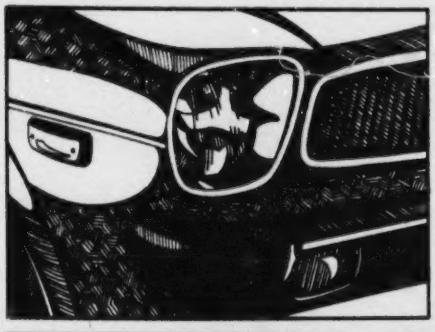
DODGE ASPEN - 1977, tan, low mileage, 2-door, 6-cylinder engine, automatic transmission, power steering, no rust, carpeting, snow tires. $3295.

And now, back to Lynn and Cara . . . . who have picked a car to look at from the newspaper ads. Will Cara ever find a car?

Lynn will help Cara
Find a good used car.
There are important things to check for
Lynn tells Cara what they are.

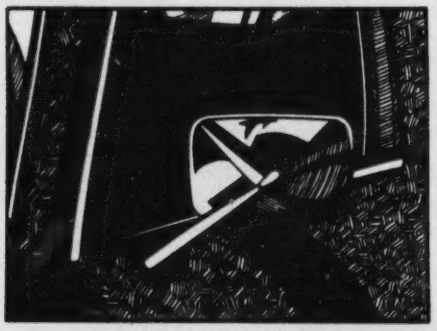
LYNN'S SAFETY-FIRST check list:

Check for these things when you buy a used car.



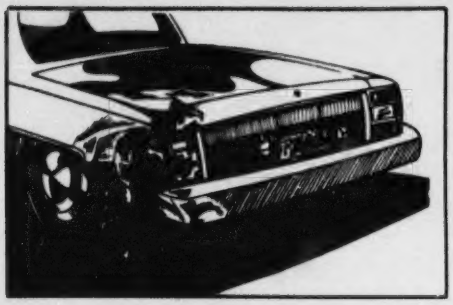
HEADLIGHTS Are they unbroken? You'll check to see if they work correctly later. Then, you'll also check the high and low beams. But first, make sure they are unbroken.

WINDSHIELDS Are they cracked? Are wipers in place? When you get in the car, check to see if the wipers work.



OUTSIDE MIRROR Is it in place? Can you turn it easily?

TIRES Give them the "penny test" — no joke — it usually works. What's the penny test? It's easy. Place a penny between the treads. Remember this rhyme:
See the top of Lincoln's head?
The tire is missing too much tread!
Are the tires evenly worn? If not, the wheels may need alignment. This is not too expensive to repair but correct alignment is important for safety.



DENTS Are there any dents? If so, the car may have been hit and shifted off frame.

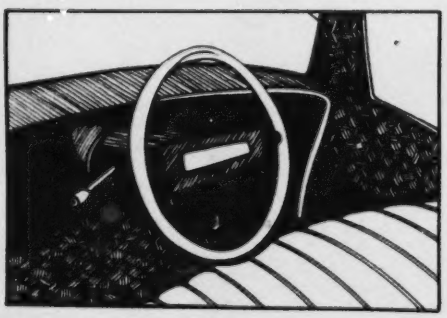
SHOCK ABSORBERS Push down on the corner of the car. If it bounces more than once (maybe more than twice), the shocks could be worn. They will not be too expensive to replace.

GET IN THE CAR. GIVE IT ANOTHER SAFETY CHECK

HORN Test the horn first. It's good to be able to let the world know you are coming when you need to.

HEADLIGHTS Try the lights. Make sure they come on. Today, some luxury cars have lights that come on automatically. You can test them yourself by hand. But you should arrange a time to make sure the automatic lights work. Check for high beam. Does it work?

DOORS How do the doors close? If they do not close tight, the car may have been in an accident.



STEERING WHEEL Is it loose? If it moves more than 2 inches in either direction, it is too loose for safe driving. This will be very expensive to repair.

EMERGENCY BRAKE Does it work? Can you hear it take hold? You'll really need this if you park on hills or on an icy driveway.

TURN BLINKERS AND EMERGENCY FLASH Do the turn blinkers work? Fixing them or repairing them may be as simple as replacing a bulb.

ROAD TEST - DON'T GUESS

Before you buy any car, new or used, drive it. Try to drive it under the same conditions that you'll be using it. Will you be making a lot of long, highway trips? Try the car on a stretch of highway. Will you do a lot of stop-and-go city driving? Drive it under those conditions, too.

What about parking? It is important to try parking the car while you're on the road test. Park on a hill. Park in a tight spot. Find out if the car is easy to handle.

Make a three-point or Y turn. Some cars are easy to turn in tight spots. Some are not. The turning radius (the amount of space the car needs to turn around) of different cars is not the same. Pick a car with a turning radius that you are comfortable with.

Here are some good questions to ask yourself during a road test:

Does this car start easily? (A blue smokey start may signal real trouble).

Does this car ride smoothly? Is it easy to steer? How does it take corners and curves?

How does this car increase in speed? Does it have a lot of power? Does it take a long time to build up speed?

Does the car pull to the side when you try to stop?

Is this car noisy? (The muffler?)

How does this car stop when the engine is turned off? Is there engine run-on? This may not be a big problem. Or it could be quite serious. Best to have a mechanic check this one.

In fact, it's best to have a mechanic check *any* used car's insides before buying it.

SAFETY-FIRST CHECK LIST QUIZ

Draw a line between the things to check for in list A and the part of the car in list B.

A	B
If the car bounces when pushed on the corner, these may need to be replaced.	DOORS
If this moves more than 2 inches in either direction, it is too loose.	HEADLIGHTS
	TIRES
If these do not close tight, the car may have been in an accident.	SHOCK ABSORBERS
If too much tread is missing, these will have to be replaced for safe driving.	STEERING WHEEL
These should be unbroken. They should come on and show both a low and high beam	

UNSCRAMBLE THESE WORDS FOR OTHER THINGS THAT SHOULD BE CHECKED FOR SAFETY:

N O R H ___ ___ ___ ___

N E D T S ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

S H D L S I E I N W D ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

M E E R E G N C Y K E A R B

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

Name one other thing that you should check for safety. _____

Can you think of five things that you should check during a road test? List them on the lines below:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

MARVIN'S MARVELOUS ROAD-TEST

Use the words in the box to fill in the blanks in this story about Marvin.

speed	smoke	start	brakes	noisy	power

Marvin got in the car. He tried to _____ the car but got a cloud of blue _____ instead. When he finally got the car started, he took it to the highway. He wanted to see how the car increased its _____. If it did not have enough _____ for highway driving, it wasn't the right car for him. But the car did have a lot of _____. It increased its _____ as soon as Marvin mashed on the gas pedal. Before he knew it, Marvin was coming to a stop sign. He stepped on the _____. But the car did not stop. Marvin skidded past the stop sign. He stopped the car right in front of a policewoman. "I tried to stop," Marvin cried. "But the _____ don't work. They wouldn't take hold."

"Don't worry, mister," the policewoman replied. "You're stopped now and if your _____ don't work, you better leave the car here and walk." It was then that Marvin remembered, blue _____ is a sign of real trouble ahead.

TO TELL THE TRUTH

How can you tell the truth about the used car you might buy? Lynn's safety-first check list will help. This tell-the-truth checklist will help too.

The truth about miles:

Ask yourself, "How many miles has this car been driven?"

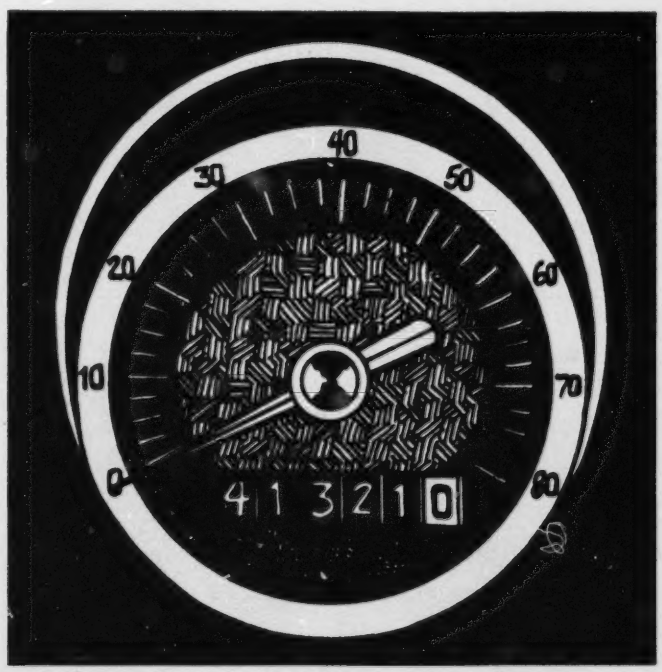
To tell the truth, look at the odometer, first. You'll find it somewhere behind the steering wheel. It's usually on the speedometer.

How many miles are on the odometer below?

_____

Average use is between 10,000 and 12,000 miles per year.

A 4-year-old car with 40,000 miles has been driven about 10,000 miles a year. Try to buy a used car that has been driven an average number of miles a year.



MORE ABOUT MILES . . . .

How to find the average miles driven a year.

Divide the total miles on the odometer by the age of the car, as follows:

A 4-year-old car, driven 40,000 miles

$$4\overline{)40{,}000}\quad \text{10,000 average miles} \qquad \text{or} \qquad 40{,}000 \div 4 = 10{,}000 \text{ average miles}$$

Now you tell the truth about each used car listed below. Pretend you are buying the car in 1978.

A '76 Ford with 40,000 miles.
How old is the car? _____
How many average miles driven a year? _____

A '74 Chevy with 30,000 miles.
How old is the car? _____
How many average miles driven a year? _____

A '73 Dodge with 100,000 miles.
How old is the car? _____
How many average miles driven per year? _____

Remember, try to buy a used car that has an average or below average number of miles driven each year.

TO TELL THE TRUTH

More clues to use:

Worn pads on the foot pedals — come from lots of driving.
Worn seat on the driver's side — comes from lots of driving.
Loose door on the driver's side — comes from lots of getting in and out and lots of driving.

THE TRUTH ABOUT CAR CARE

RUST If you see this ugly red monster eating away at a car, beware. Look under fenders. Look under the doors. If you see rust there, the car may not have had good care. Look at the body. If you see rust there, the car may not have had good care. BEWARE.

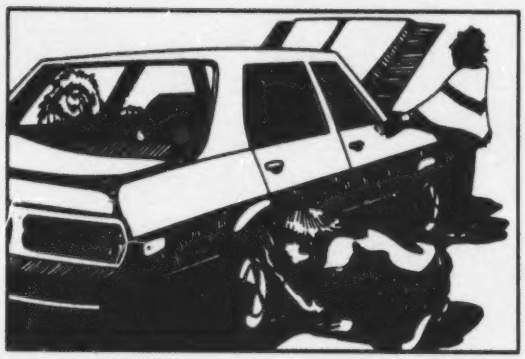
THE TRUTH ABOUT COMFORT

Will the used car you're thinking of buying be comfortable? If there is a radio, does it work? Are the speakers in good shape? Does the heater work? Does it give off enough heat? Does it get too hot?

If there is an air conditioner, does it work? If there is climate control? Does it work?

If there are power windows and seats, do they work? (Ever tried to get a breath of fresh air from a broken power window?

Now, back to Cara and Lynn who have just finished checking out a used car . . .



Lynn and Cara
Have just checked-out a car.
They used Lynn's special check lists
To see how right things are.

Though this car seemed
To be OK,
Cara still isn't happy -
There's something more to weigh.

"Lynn," says Cara,
"The way I figure,
I need something
A whole lot bigger."

"On this point
I'm not off base.
This car just
Doesn't have the space,

For the dozen bass fiddles
I have to deliver
To the concert hall
Across the river."

"What?" cries Lynn,
"Aw shucks, aw shucks!
We should be looking
At a line of trucks!"

"You're right," says Cara,
"I deliver loads -
Everything from fiddles
To great big crates of toads.

So Cara and Lynn
Decide they must go
But on the way home,
They pass the AUTO SHOW!

"Come on. Let's go in,"
Lynn says to her friend.
"Let's look at some new cars."
The thought makes her grin.

They go in the show.
They browse around.
Lynn smiles at the engines.
The prices make Cara frown.

"Oh, Cara, look'."
Lynn says. "You're in luck.
There's what you need -
A nice big truck!"

Lynn points to a truck
With bright red paint.
Cara looks at the sticker.
The price makes her feel faint.

Once Cara gets back
On her feet,
She and Lynn
Head down the street.

Cara sighs.
She's losing hope.
"Come on," says Lynn,
"There's no reason to mope."

"Let's drop by
A NEW CAR LOT
And see what kind
Of trade-ins they've got."

"New car lots often
Take cars in trade.
The mechanics fix them up
So they're real top grade."

"You'll see, Cara,
You'll be in luck.
I know you'll find
Your own little truck."

But the salesman at the car lot
Is mean and lazy.
"I don't have any *little* trucks.
Are you girls crazy?"

Now Cara and Lynn
Aren't sure where to look
So Cara suggests
They look in some books.

These books tell who manufacturers different cars. These books also tell how much you should plan to pay for a certain used car.

USED CAR PRICE BOOKS

YOU CAN FIND THESE BOOKS IN YOUR LIBRARY.
THE LIBRARIAN WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU FIND THEM.

Look for these books:
- N.A.D.A. Official Used Car Guide
- Kelley Blue Book Market Report
- Red Book Official Used Car Valuation
- Buyer's Guide Report on Used Truck and Van Prices

Cara and Lynn
Found out who made
The kind of little truck
That would make the grade . . .

They telephoned the dealers
Who sold those kinds of trucks.
They found three that were used.
They were really in luck.

Then Cara and Lynn
Went around
To see and to road-test
Each truck they had found.

Then they made a list that looked like this:

1. 1974 MAZDA PICK-UP

Price $2000	Road-test - low power, good brakes, easy park, easy turn, bumpy ride.
Auto	60 K miles
Air	No rust
AM/FM	Good condition (must have mechanic check)
	No warranty
	Good mpg

2. 1975 CHEVY LUV PICK-UP

Price: $2200	Road test - low power, 4-wheel great in mud, easy turn, easy park, good brakes, bumpy ride
Manual	No rust
Air	Good condition (must have mechanic check)
50 K miles	90 day or 1000 mile warranty
4 wheel drive	Fair - good mpg (4 wheel drive uses more gas)

3. 1975 FORD COURIER

Price: $2600	Road test - good power, good brakes, easy park, easy turn, bumpy ride
Auto	No rust
Air	Special sports int.
AM/FM	Good condition (mechanic must check)
	Good mpg
	3000 mile warranty
	40 K miles

Here's what one used car book
Had to say
About how much
Cara should pay:

1974 MAZDA

List Price	*Average Trade-in Value*	*Average Retail*
$2988	$1350	$1900

Add to price for: automatic $125/150; air $50/200; power steering $75/100, For 60 K miles, subtract $25 from Average Retail.

1975 CHEVY LUV PICK UP

List Price	*Average Trade-in Value*	*Average Retail*
$2976	$1826	$2425

Add to price: automatic $125/150; air $50/200
No add or subtract for 50 K miles

1975 FORD COURIER

List Price	*Average Trade-in Value*	*Average Retail*
$3146	$1825	$2425

Add to price: automatic $75; air $50/200
For 40 K miles, add $25 to retail price

What this means:

List price: the basic price of the truck — the standard price without any extras.

Average Trade-in: How much you could get, trading it in on another car.

Average Retails How much you should have to pay for it.

If each of these cars is ok when Lynn gives it a mechanic's check out, can you help Cara decide which one will be best?

Answer these questions:

Circle the Answer

1. Which truck has the lowest mileage?
   Mazda Chevy Ford
2. Which truck has the most extras (like air, AM/FM, four-wheel drive)
   Mazda Chevy Ford
3. Which truck is closest to the retail price listed in the buyer's guide?
   Mazda Chevy Ford
4. Which truck has the best warranty?
   Mazda Chevy Ford
5. Which truck has the highest price?
   Mazda Chevy Ford
6. If you were Cara, which truck would you buy?
   Mazda Chevy Ford

BEFORE CARA CAN CUT A CAPER

Once Cara has picked out the
little truck she wants, there are some other
things she must pay for, too.
Fill in the cost you think Cara will
have to pay for each thing listed below.
Think of how much each thing costs in
your state or city. Think of
how much you have paid for these
things in the past, if you own your
own car.

How much will these things add to what Cara
pays for the truck?

Other Costs

Insurance _____

Registration _____

Sales Tax _____

License plates _____

Other _____

(List anything you can think of)

A. Write the cost of the truck you think Cara picked here: _____
B. Add up the other costs above. Write the sum here: _____
C. Add up line A and B. Write the total here: _____

Cost of Cara's truck.

It's hard to tell,
Even if you're slick,
Just which pick-up
Cara picked.

But one thing
You can surely know,
She got the right truck
For driving in snow.

She got the right truck
for her money, too.
And she didn't have many
Repairs to do.

So if you ever see Cara
Delivering loads,
From big bass fiddles to
Crates of toads,

Ask her to tell you
What she finally did get —
Then stand back —
'Cause Cara gives that little truck a fit.